Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and thirty-ninth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 8 February 2018, at 4.20 p.m.

President: Mr. Ravinatha Aryasinha .....(Sri Lanka)

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The President: I call to order the 1439th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, dear colleagues, let me take up the list of requests from non-member States of the Conference wishing to participate in our work during the 2018 session. The requests received by the Conference on Disarmament secretariat by 3 p.m. on 7 February are set out in document CD/WP.604/Add.3, which is available on your tables. Any requests from non-member States received after the date indicated above will be presented for your consideration and decision at the next plenary meetings.

The representative of Iran has the floor.

Mr. Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me convey to you our congratulations on the assumption of that office and also the praise and the cooperation of our delegation. We praise and admire your efforts, your very hard efforts to bring us to a conclusion.

As far as this new draft decision is concerned, I have been informed that we would like to defer it until the next plenary meeting, so that we can check it with our capital.

The President: There is no draft decision. Do you mean the note on the non-members?

Mr. Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Yes, Mr. President.

The President: There is one State listed in document CD/WP.604/Add.3.

Mr. Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, it concerns the inclusion of this State in the list of non-member States participating in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. In this context, I would like to defer this draft note by you for further consideration by my capital and to come back to you later in the next plenary meeting.

The President: Since we need consensus to effect the participation of members, we will defer it, so that you can come back to me next Tuesday.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, I wish to share with you my observations on the progress that I have witnessed in the Conference over the past two weeks and the session on Tuesday. Let me reflect on my consultations and the open discussion that took place in the previous weeks on the programme of work.

I wish to place this in a continuum of what the Sri Lankan presidency set out to do when we took up the first presidency last month. If I may refer back to my opening remarks made on 23 January 2018, having detailed the consultations that I had undertaken in the run-up to the January 2018 session, and the greater extent of coordination that we had developed among the six Presidents of this session, I observed:

> Sri Lanka fully acknowledges the importance of establishing a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament early on. We believe, however, that it should evolve through an expeditious process of consultations and consensus-making. During my consultations so far, delegations have reaffirmed their willingness to engage in this regard. However, further efforts are required to build convergence on any of the agenda items, with a view to developing a programme of work. Nevertheless, we note that over the past years a number of sound proposals were presented, some even reaching near-consensus, but, due to circumstances, failed to sustain momentum. It would be worthwhile for this Conference to revisit these proposals in their original packages or as individual agenda items, as part of a stocktaking exercise, with a view to explore commonalities and possible modifications that may be required to adapt them to the current circumstances and realities. Such an approach may help us in finding points of convergence on a possible programme of work. We therefore hope that the document compiled by the Conference secretariat and circulated last week will facilitate an open and informed discussion.

That was what I said and in this process I invited delegations to consider presenting fresh ideas and innovative approaches, including through written submissions that could bridge the existing gaps. I concluded on that section as follows that day. I also highlighted

that the process suggested could be results-oriented if the key players and other members showed willingness to engage.

As you know, on 23 January, we had originally intended that towards the end of our presidency we would move on to a substantive discussion of the Conference on Disarmament agenda items which might have been widely acceptable. However, following the stocktaking exercise and the rich substantive interventions made by delegations last week, we have decided to persevere with trying to find a path towards developing a programme of work, instead of having discussions on agenda items, in order to benefit from the positive momentum generated by last week's discussion.

During the deliberations last week on a programme of work, even though the discussion was initially intended to be informal, most delegations chose to speak in the formal plenary meeting, on record, and made comments on how the Conference on Disarmament could move forward. My assessment was that the Conference as a whole was keen to get back to substantive work. Emphasis was placed by some on the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament and the need to adopt a programme of work with a negotiating mandate early in the session.

In addition to comments on the compilation presented on past proposals made on the programme of work since the year 2000 and the reiteration of some of those proposals by delegations, some delegations put forward new proposals on reconciling and synthesizing the different views expressed on how to move forward. The importance of dealing with emerging and new issues related to international peace and security was also highlighted. The Conference strongly felt that it needs to build trust and confidence among member States.

While commending the current efforts towards greater coordination among the six Presidents of the 2018 session, delegations also highlighted the need to revisit the working methods of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular regarding the duration of the presidency. While pointing out that the consensus rule provides sufficient safeguards for member States to protect their national interests, delegations also highlighted that this should be used by States in a responsible manner. Similarities were also pointed out between technical discussions and negotiation-led work.

The need for greater coherence between the Conference on Disarmament and other disarmament machinery, and also for the enrichment of the Conference with the work of those mechanisms, was also pointed out. Some delegations also highlighted the need to focus on developments in the field of science and technology relevant to the agenda of the Conference. The benefits of appropriate engagement with civil society were also pointed out.

The Conference stands enriched by these comments, suggestions and ideas. Most important, delegations noted the existence of converging elements among the various proposals and stressed that those ideas should not be allowed to wither away but, rather, should be captured and presented to States so that they can evaluate how to translate them into something to be looked at more specifically.

In this context, the presidency has met with a number of States which tabled tangible proposals with a view to discussing them further in order to find synergies among approaches and proposals made in plenary session. The President has also consulted extensively with the other Presidents of this session and other Conference on Disarmament member States. As a result of these consultations, it is evident that the Conference should resume substantive work which could lead to progress towards negotiations. In this context, the President wishes to present some ideas that could help the Conference to engage in substantive work and to work towards a programme of work at the earliest possible time. There seems to be interest in steps that could be taken in this direction in order to prepare the ground for future negotiations.

On the basis of my consultations, I would like to suggest the following phases of substantive work. These are, first, to reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities in the Conference on Disarmament by taking into consideration all relevant views and proposals past, present and future; second, deepen technical discussions and progressively

broaden areas of agreement, including through the participation of relevant experts as well as representatives of civil society, in accordance with established practice; and, third, to consider the different options of possible instruments with a view to initiating negotiations at the earliest possible time.

For that purpose, five separate subsidiary bodies could be established, of which four are to work on core agenda items and the fifth on agenda items 5, 6 and 7, together with emerging issues relevant to the work of the Conference. Each group could be chaired by a coordinator appointed on the basis of equitable geographical rotation for the duration of the session with an even allocation of time. The progress achieved and agreed on in each subsidiary body would be submitted by its coordinator to the Conference on Disarmament, through the President, for adoption and due reflection in the annual report.

We should look at this approach as a continuum over a period of time. As initially indicated, we believe that this process as suggested could be results-oriented if the key players and other members show willingness to engage. I invite delegations to reflect on my proposal. I first give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Mxakato-Diseko (South Africa): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am speaking, permit me to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Kindly accept my assurances of our cooperation in support of your efforts to guide us through this opening phase of the 2018 session of the Conference.

Mr. President, through you, I wish to thank the Ambassador of the United States of America for sharing information on the 2018 United States Nuclear Posture Review with us at the last plenary meeting.

For some time now, our colleagues from the United States have highlighted the progress made through reductions in the numbers and roles of nuclear weapons, arguably in line with the stated policy priority in their 2010 Nuclear Posture Review. Now, in 2018, however, the United States regrettably plans to increase the salience of nuclear weapons by building new ones, envisaged to be smaller, more usable, low-yield nuclear weapons. These new weapons would supposedly counter any misperceptions of an exploitable gap in the regional deterrence capabilities of the United States of America.

Regrettably, despite positive gains in the reduction of the number of nuclear weapons compared to cold war highs, progress towards nuclear disarmament has stagnated and the United Nations disarmament machinery has been in virtual paralysis for more than two decades. Over the last few years we have continued to witness attempts by some States to roll back and reinterpret the nuclear disarmament commitments made since 1995, in particular with regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This, coupled with modernization programmes and arguments justifying the continued retention of nuclear weapons by some States – on the basis of their alleged security benefits – continues to polarize the nuclear non-proliferation regime and fundamentally undermines the grand bargain struck in which the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was indefinitely extended. For that reason, there is a hollow and sinister ring to the claim by the United States that it is championing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Although the latest review seeks to reassure us that the approach of the United States would not lower the nuclear threshold, this would seem to be at odds with plans to build more low-yield nuclear weapons that would appear to indicate the greater appetite of the United States to resort to the use of nuclear weapons in a future conflict.

The current tensions on the Korean Peninsula have clearly illustrated that neither the pursuit nor the possession of nuclear weapons can bring about increased security. This has made us even more determined in our quest towards the total elimination of these horrific weapons. The reality of the threats facing the global community today is that they frequently transcend national boundaries in our increasingly interconnected world. This requires an approach to international peace and security that goes beyond the narrow national security paradigm which dominated the twentieth century, including in the balance of power struggle between cold war rivals. Common threats can only be effectively addressed through enhanced international cooperation and strong international institutions that can respond collectively to collective security concerns.

Although the new Nuclear Posture Review states that the nuclear weapons of the United States would be used only in "extreme circumstances", it would appear to extend these "extreme circumstances" to include non-nuclear strategic attacks on civilian populations and infrastructure and the use of nuclear forces.

It is an anomaly that the threat of use of nuclear weapons remains a central tenet of the so-called nuclear deterrent postures. For without the threat of use, there can be no deterrent; and without possession, there can be no threat of use. Deterrence requires the threat of use which is not only contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, but which would have unacceptable catastrophic consequences, as all States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have agreed. Accordingly, we believe that there is no value in maintaining weapons that cannot be used. These weapons are not only unacceptable, inhumane and illegal instruments, but they clearly also have no credible utility other than serving as a motivation for proliferation, thereby undermining international peace and security.

What is also disappointing in chapter X of the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, dealing with non-proliferation and arms control, is the characterization of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as having been fuelled by wholly unrealistic expectations of the elimination of nuclear arsenals, without the prerequisite transformation of the international security environment. It is interesting to note that the United States of America believes that this effort has polarized the international community and seeks to inject disarmament issues into non-proliferation forums, potentially damaging the non-proliferation regime.

The United States is entitled to hold whatever views it wants about the nuclear ban treaty. To state, however, that the treaty seeks to inject disarmament issues into non-proliferation forums which would be damaging to the non-proliferation regime cannot be anything but an admission that, for the United States, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is only about non-proliferation and that article VI and any nuclear disarmament efforts contained in the Treaty are meaningless. Therefore, to argue the importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty while undermining it leaves us wondering as to what the ultimate objectives or intentions are.

This admission reassures me that the nuclear ban treaty was indeed needed. It is interesting to note that the United States Ambassador's main and almost singular reference to disarmament talks is about "the long-term goal of disarmament, as conditions permit". We wonder what would be the conditions that permit disarmament.

On the contrary, South Africa believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are symbiotically and inextricably linked elements of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and therefore progress in both elements is essential to realize the object and purpose of the treaty.

In this regard, we would like to express our concern about the lack of significant progress on nuclear disarmament. We are further deeply concerned about the tendency to select and focus on preferred provisions of the treaty by some States. As long as some States seek to impose additional non-proliferation measures beyond obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a precondition for fulfilling their nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty, others may also endeavour to use nuclear disarmament as a precondition for nuclear non-proliferation. Efforts of that nature can only unravel the Treaty and this is a matter of concern to South Africa.

While some argue that the current international security situation is not conducive to further progress towards nuclear disarmament or that certain conditions must first be met before it can become a reality, South Africa and the majority of the world's people and nations believe that there is no room for procrastination. Former President Mandela, who would have been 100 years old this year, once noted that there is never a wrong time to do the right thing.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, and vertical and horizontal proliferation persists, the threat to humanity will remain. As we have said time and time again, the only way to eliminate this threat is the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, as envisaged under the indefinite extension of the Treaty's grand bargain and also under article VI of the Treaty. It

is therefore a shared responsibility of all States to prevent any use of nuclear weapons to curb their proliferation and to achieve nuclear disarmament.

In the above regard, South Africa stands ready to continue to play its part towards a more peaceful and equitable and just international order.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa and I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Ms. Flores Liera (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to express gratitude for the consultations that you have carried out and the efforts you have made since the beginning of your presidency. We hope that they will lead in the near future to the adoption of a programme of work that reflects the Conference's negotiating mandate.

My delegation listened with great interest to the comments made by the delegations during the previous plenary meeting. We noted in particular that some delegations expressed their views on substantive agenda items. My country is greatly troubled by those comments, as they indicate that the world is currently on the brink of a new arms race, a situation that is at odds with the spirit and the objectives of the Conference and the United Nations.

Mexico reiterates its position on nuclear disarmament and its conviction that only the total elimination of nuclear weapons will ensure that the world will not again witness the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the detonation of a nuclear weapon.

We call on the nuclear-weapon States to behave with caution and responsibility during this period of uncertainty. As recognized in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, "the ending of the arms race and the achievement of real disarmament are tasks of primary importance and urgency". Nearly 40 years after the adoption of the Final Document, there is still an urgent need, crucial to the safety of humanity, to move forward with these tasks. We hope that this urgency is reflected in our work this year.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to express thanks for the presentation last Tuesday by Ambassador Heidi Hulan of Canada, chair of the high-level Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material, on the progress made by the Group and the work planned for the year's session.

We are grateful for the commitment of Canada to this issue. It is the view of Mexico that the adoption of a treaty banning the production of fissile material that contributes to disarmament and non-proliferation would send a clear signal to the world at the moment, so we encourage a swift conclusion to the negotiations.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico and I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Mr. President, thank you for your introduction and all the efforts that you have undertaken in advancing the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. We appreciate the consultations which have taken place and we believe that you took good note of the different ideas and suggestions made and put on the table by Conference member States. This is a constructive exercise, taking into account the different proposals being made, but we have to be realistic. In the absence of consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, we have to try to find a creative way forward to unblock the deadlock. The proposal that you just have made and outlined is a way to move forward: the establishment of subsidiary bodies to deal with the different elements on the agenda is a viable step towards a real programme of work.

As my delegation said last week, the Netherlands would like to see the Conference on Disarmament agree on a mandate on which to continue our deliberations, putting substance first, with a view to fulfilling our mandate, namely, the negotiation of disarmament – disarmament measures that meet today's security threats.

The working group on the way ahead provided a good first step in that direction and we are keen to see that work continue in a higher gear and with greater focus. This is another way forward. We should oblige ourselves to use this proposal in order to advance

our work and to deal with the different elements of our agenda, in as tangible and substantive a manner as possible. The perspective of negotiations on the different topics is there, depending on the outcome of the deliberations in the different groups. Let us give it a chance.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands and I now give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I am taking the floor to respond to the remarks recently made by the representative of South Africa, who I understand has just left the room. That is unfortunate because I wanted to address her points and wanted her to be here to hear them but nonetheless I will address them.

First and foremost, I think that the representative of South Africa has probably not read the Nuclear Posture Review and, frankly, this issue about the United States potentially lowering the threshold of nuclear use, as I said the other day in my statement, is absolutely absurd. What we are doing with regard to the low-yield weapons that I talked about is to raise the threshold for others who might be seeking and probing for weaknesses in nuclear deterrents, in particular as practised by the United States and its allies.

Some, including the representative of South Africa, continue to ignore the international security environment. They tend to ignore the tensions that exist internationally and think that waving the magic wand of a nuclear weapons ban treaty is going to solve the issue. Well, as we all know, a nuclear weapons ban treaty is not going to eliminate nuclear weapons. What this treaty has done, and South Africa is of course one of its major proponents, is further to divide the disarmament community, poison the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review process and to send some sort of signal to nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-possessing States that we can solve the world's problems just by getting rid of nuclear weapons.

This is a State, frankly, that claims to represent the concerns of the world on nuclear disarmament, a State that refused to hold Conference on Disarmament plenary meetings last August, and refused to take calls from me to address the issue. A number of countries sent a letter requesting that plenary meetings be held so that we could address some serious issues in the international security threat environment, but we were unable to do so. Thus, the claims of the representative of South Africa to speak for the international community with regard to disarmament concerns ring hollow.

Let me just close by saying it is unfortunate that the representative of South Africa has left the room because I think she needs to address a number of these questions that we have put forward about why South Africa decided that it wanted to do what it did at the Conference last year. I would just make one final point on the nuclear weapons ban treaty. I have said and we will continue to say that the way to address the issue of nuclear disarmament is to create the conditions that allow for further nuclear disarmament. A nuclear ban treaty will not, I repeat, will not reduce nuclear weapon stockpiles anywhere in the world by one single weapon. So we need to be realistic about what can be achieved. Coming forth with the nuclear weapons ban treaty, to my knowledge, has not reduced stockpiles since by so much as a single nuclear weapon and therefore, if those people are interested in seeing a world free of nuclear weapons, they need to work with us and other like-minded people to reduce the tensions and create the conditions that allow for further nuclear disarmament.

I said one last point, but I have one more very brief last point: the United States has been and will continue to be a big supporter of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to uphold its obligations under that Treaty.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States. I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Hakala (Finland): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor during your presidency, let me assure you of the full support of my delegation.

Mr. President, you have created a positive atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament through your constructive efforts, which are well represented in the

observations and proposals that you have put forward. Finland strongly wishes to move towards negotiations in the Conference, but we are realistic and recognize that this goal is some distance away at the moment. Your proposal gives us an opportunity to resume the work that was cut off when the working group on the way ahead ended its mandate and, with it, the option of continuing work in the Conference without the need to start over each year. We find your the proposal to have subsidiary bodies covering the whole agenda of the Conference useful and the rotation of coordinators important. The equity of the member States is a core issue to us.

Mr. President, your proposal is well thought out and balanced and we hope that it will therefore give the Conference an opportunity to advance towards negotiations.

The President: I thank the representative of Finland and I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Youssef (Egypt): Mr. President, first of all, allow me to express my sincere appreciation for all the efforts that you have been conducting. We would also like to express appreciation for the wide consultations that you have been holding with the Conference on Disarmament membership and the high level of transparency with which you conducted them.

The views of Egypt on a programme of work are reflected in the general statement that we made on 30 January 2018. We would like also to thank you for the ideas that you have just presented to enable the Conference to resume substantive work and to move forward towards a programme of work which reflects the negotiating mandate of the Conference.

We will study these ideas very carefully, but allow me to make these initial remarks. While we welcomed the discussions conducted under the framework of the working group on the way ahead and we applaud the efforts of Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar, we regret the inability to reach a consensus recommendation in the working group on the way ahead, and also the lack of an official record of its meeting, in the light of its informal nature. If there is consensus among Conference on Disarmament members to follow the same approach, we would like to have a clear time frame for the discussions, along with a clear objective that the Conference can build upon in its future sessions. It would be highly advisable for the Conference to conduct its work formally and reach consensus on possible recommendations for its future work.

Egypt is well aware of the new and emerging challenges on the international security arena, such as cybersecurity and lethal autonomous weapons systems; yet these issues are considered in other parallel forums. Laws are considered under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The last Group of Governmental Experts on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security failed, unfortunately, to agree by consensus on an outcome report. We should consider when proposing such ideas whether we are helping the Conference to overcome its impasse or further prolonging this impasse by inserting contentious issues on its agenda. The Conference has unfinished business related to nuclear disarmament and other core agenda items and those, in my view, should remain its focus.

Lastly, Mr. President, we trust in your efforts and we stand ready to assist you to the best of our ability.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Mr. President, my delegation feels, as you yourself remarked, that in the opening statements of this year's formal sessions there is a certain convergence of views to the effect that we should make yet another effort to find a pathway towards something that is equivalent to a programme of work; something that gives the Conference back its functionality, which we all wish to see translated into something very tangible and worthwhile. I believe that it will be very difficult to achieve this if we all stick exactly to the same positions of the last two decades.

I therefore believe that your efforts are timely; we fully support you and the direction that you have taken. We have to test the limits of the flexibilities that may be present during the initial period of this year. We need to have something more than we had last year – more than the working group on the way ahead. What you are suggesting seems to be a discussion in a process that would necessarily lead to something that is more than just an informal discussion of a kind that, in the end, is not captured by any formal process and which would not lead to any recommendations being made by the Conference.

We should pursue this path and seek to exploit the commonalities that may exist. My delegation believes in disarmament as a pathway towards peace and security and development and cooperation. We believe that, if the international conditions have not improved, then there is even more of a case for finding a way to enable the Conference to become a body which is relevant for the discussion of all dimensions of this international context, under a mandate or a process that could lead to an outcome which is relevant, which is not just a discussion. It must be something which, in the end, would possibly lead to instruments on which we could all agree.

Accordingly, we are strongly behind you and we believe that it is the responsibility of all Conference on Disarmament members to strive continuously to achieve this agreement. Even if it has eluded us in the past, perhaps, as the international conditions of security have deteriorated, the conditions for agreement might now have improved.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil and I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Mr. President, I would like to refer to your opening remarks where you propose the way ahead. I would like to thank you very much for having undertaken these very intense consultations. The picture that you painted for us shows that there is a clear tendency, a general feeling that we need to move ahead. In order, however, to get a picture of where we can move ahead, it makes sense to have a short look into the past, to where we stand right now and what we have been through. We know that, for 22 years, we have been at a virtual standstill in the Conference and that is not for any lack of intuitive and innovative ideas or for lack of trying, but because there were major political obstacles in our way.

The most promising avenues that we have had before us over the last couple of years were in the schedule of activities and the working group on the way ahead. I believe, realistically, that we would be well advised to build on that. From our perspective, the question is what can be or should be the right level of ambition. It seems that we all agree on the need to strive intensely for a programme of work with a clear negotiating mandate, as mandated by the first special session devoted to disarmament.

For my delegation, I can say that we have come to the conclusion that, for the time being, this has eluded us. We feel this calls for a progressive approach towards a programme of work with such a mandate. It has to be clear, however, from the outset, that we are striving towards negotiations and that they should be set out very clearly at the beginning; but we should build from where we stand right now, on what has been already built over the last couple of years.

There is a degree of commonality when it comes to substance. It makes sense to take stock of that again. It would also make sense, from our perspective, to enhance areas of commonality in terms of substance on the four core issues, and possibly on emerging issues, because they might be of relevance to the Conference and to peace and security in general. It would also make sense to strive for commonalities on options for the way ahead. So, in terms of substance and procedure, we should enhance commonalities. This calls for in-depth discussions, which go beyond a general exchange of views, but should be dealt with in working groups.

As I said at the outset, it is a question of aiming for the right level of ambition. In my view, the approach that you have just outlined is the right one for us. If we do not come to grips with our task here, we again run the risk that the Conference will lose increasingly more relevance and this for us is not acceptable. So we strongly support your approach, Mr. President, and would encourage others to join in.

The President: I thank the representative of Germany for his comments and I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, followed by the representative of the United States.

Ms. Flores Liera (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President, including for allowing me to take the floor for the second time. I simply wish to clarify a few matters, as some comments were made on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which, as everyone knows, is a treaty to which Mexico attaches particular importance and considers a great priority.

The Treaty, as its name implies, is not intended to eliminate nuclear weapons. It is intended to ban them in the States that are parties to the Treaty. We proponents have reiterated on several occasions that this Treaty is not the ultimate goal of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, that other aspects play a fundamental role and that other aspects must be given consideration.

The Treaty simply prohibits the use of nuclear weapons on the grounds that they are inherently inhumane, have indiscriminate and catastrophic effects and are, of course, contrary to international law. But it is also important to note that the Treaty recognizes the importance of the non-proliferation regime and that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of non-proliferation and disarmament. That recognition strikes us as very important, as remarks to the effect that the proposed treaty is divisive and poisonous are signs of an utterly mistaken perspective, as being divisive and poisonous is naturally not the objective of the treaty's backers or Mexico. We therefore believe that it is important to strengthen dialogue, to understand the purpose of the treaty and not to make corrosive remarks, since the aim of the treaty, considered a major milepost by its backers, is to contribute to the achievement of the ultimate goal: non-proliferation.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I just want to respond briefly to the representative of Mexico. This nuclear ban treaty will have absolutely no practical impact on nuclear disarmament. As I said earlier, this treaty undermines the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. If you need proof of that, you can go to the text of the nuclear ban treaty itself, where it says, I cannot remember the paragraph number, but it says in fact that if there is a conflict between the treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the latter treaty takes precedence. I just wanted to make that point for the record.

Mr. President, thank you very much for your proposal. I will certainly pass this on to Washington, but I will review it beforehand. Just one question: in your proposal are you talking about formal discussions or informal discussions? I just wanted to find out which route you have decided to take.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his comments. I will respond to the questions which come up to the extent necessary at the end of the session. Let me now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Nikolaichik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to thank you for the work done and the constructive approach in evidence during the first months of our work in 2018.

Last year, my delegation repeatedly raised the question of what a negotiating mandate actually was, and we said that, in our view, any negotiation encompassed several stages, the first of which was precisely an attempt to find common ground that would make it possible to determine the object, purpose and scope of any of the international documents drawn up by the Conference. We believe that the proposals that you have formulated are suited at the very least to the first phase of negotiation, which, in our view, will make it possible to return the Conference to substantive work and, ultimately, achieve the goals set for it by the special session.

In this connection, we would like to support this proposal as one that is worthy of consideration and further promotion.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus. I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Gill (India): Each plenary session reminds us of the difficult and challenging times through which disarmament and non-proliferation are passing and today's plenary meeting is no different. Nor was the plenary meeting on Tuesday any different, when we heard clearly that a treaty to which a large number of us attached importance cannot be negotiated in this Council Chamber.

In this context Mr. President, we thank you for staying focused on what is positive and what is constructive. In these difficult and challenging times, it is important not to lose what we already have and the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum set up by consensus by a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is part of what we already have and it is important to preserve the integrity and the role of this body. It is also important to preserve the contact, the dialogue that all stakeholders in disarmament and non-proliferation have in various forums around the United Nations system and beyond it.

Mr. President, you and others are aware of the priorities of my delegation. We want to uphold this body, we want to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in accordance with document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein and without prejudice to the priority which we attach to nuclear disarmament. We were happy to go along with the programme of work that our Mexican colleagues had presented, which provided for negotiation on both these aspects; but we were also happy to look at other negotiating mandates or other mandates that help us advance on important questions, such as the prevention of an arms race in outer space, where we have proposals on the table and where we actually need the mandate for us to be able to look at those proposals.

Now, several colleagues today have pointed out that we made some efforts in the past few years – regarding the schedule of activities and the working group on the way ahead – and I agree with them that we need to strive continuously to improve things. Our Brazilian colleague said that we need to be striving continuously. I also agree with our colleague from Germany that we need to build on what we have already accomplished. It is important that we show added value in respect of what was done last year in the working group on the way ahead. We petered out at the end, partly because we could not find the right interface between the presidency and the gallant efforts of our colleague from Myanmar. So, we need to do better than that and the proposals, the ideas that you have presented, are a step in that direction.

We will also study these carefully, we will send them to our capital. As a preliminary reaction, however, I can already say that the idea of setting up formal subsidiary bodies to look at the core agenda items and an additional subsidiary body to look at emerging issues and the proposals that have been made in the context of items 5, 6 and 7 of our agenda is a good proposal. In addition, this concept that you have put before us of a phased approach – locking in progress where we have some basis for progress and working progressively in a phased manner in other areas – seems to be a sound principle to us. If we really drill down into the fundamental meaning of negotiations, they are about making choices, about making informed choices. Thus, anything that can help us to make choices, to make informed choices, whether it is a formal framework for engaging technical experts on the nitty-gritty of some of the possible instruments that this body should be negotiating, would, in my view, be a step forward in the overall category of negotiations.

To conclude, we look forward to your reporting back to us with whatever next step that you might be considering and we encourage you to present something that represents added value with regard to what was done last year and which keeps this body engaged on very, very important fundamental issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control at a very, very difficult time. It is a matter of our responsibility and we should not shirk our responsibility.

The President: I thank the representative of India for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Lagos (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor first to thank you for your document on the programme of work, which, we believe, fairly reflects what I would term the positive discussions that we have had these first few weeks. The document includes some interesting proposals. We would like to highlight in particular your proposal for the establishment of subsidiary bodies to discuss in greater detail the core issues of the Conference, together with new and emerging issues.

This proposal is clearly useful to the extent that it can be understood as a phase that will make it possible to move towards a negotiating mandate. We all know that it is easy to fall into the cynicism of the experienced multilateral diplomat, but we must avoid that fatalistic tendency and make use of the positive atmosphere and the excellent work that you have done, Mr. President, the numerous consultations that you have held and a shared determination to move forward at last, drawing on work that has been done in past years while also trying to do more. We fully support your efforts, Mr. President. In addition, my delegation feels obliged to react to the comments made by the Ambassador of the United States on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

I would like to stress that not one of the countries that have promoted this process nor any of the representatives of civil society has maintained that the treaty itself will make it possible to eliminate nuclear weapons. It is but a single step along a path that is likely to be very long and full of obstacles. With regard to the assertion that the treaty is dividing the international non-proliferation community, I would like to note that this process, rather than being divisive, reflects divergent views and divisions of many years' standing. It reflects the great frustration of the vast majority of countries with the limited progress made towards nuclear disarmament, or even the backsliding, and gives expression to those countries' concerns about the very existence of nuclear weapons, the accidental or intentional use of which – any use of which, including in an allegedly limited nuclear war – would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

I would also like to say that we agree fully with the statement by the Ambassador of Mexico that the nuclear ban treaty seeks to complement the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, not to weaken it. What does seriously harm and weaken the Non-Proliferation Treaty is the increasing importance attached to nuclear weapons in defence and security doctrines. That is in fact contrary to the obligations of the parties – and primarily the nuclear-weapon States – under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, article 6 in particular, and is a breach of the commitment made in the 2010 Review Conference action plan.

It is clear that, as the Ambassador of India has correctly noted, we are passing through very difficult times, meaning that we must continue seeking areas of collaboration that would make it possible to bridge gaps and finally address this priority issue and the other issues that fall within the scope of the Conference. These are the challenges facing us all. In that regard, we appreciate the work that you are doing, Mr. President, and we hope that it will help us to move forward.

The President: I thank the representative of Chile. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): Mr. President, I really appreciate your efforts and the very specific proposals and ideas that you have put before us. I am not an expert in this field, but I have three points to make, in the light of my experience of the previous year.

First, I believe that a formal status or formal meetings will be very important. When we conducted very, very extensive informal meetings, the result was not particularly good, although the level of ambition is important; but what we achieved in the informal working group has not been given effect in a formal setting. As you have already articulated, we need to pay attention to the importance of formality and the significance of a programme of work – that is what I would like to highlight.

Second, last year we had difficulty in gathering together and maintaining our very, very hard and conflicting schedules. In addition, many other ambassadors who were not focusing on the Conference on Disarmament had difficulty in meeting frequently. Accordingly, I think that the programme schedule or meeting schedule should be drawn up early enough so that we can get together and discuss substance.

Lastly, with regard to the working group on the way ahead, I think that there has been a great deal of discussion, but, as the Indian Ambassador said, we must consider how we can give added value to the setting. In order to make that happen we must employ a very well-crafted working method to focus on the substantive discussions and not just stick to our positions or merely articulate former positions. I therefore agree that substantive discussions should take place at the earliest possible time; but, at the same time, as I indicated, we have to work out a good sense of formality and good sense of scheduling and a good sense of our working methods to ensure that our discussions have real added value.

The President: I thank the representative of Japan. I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Mr. Riquet (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank you for your comments and introductory remarks and, more generally, for the outstanding efforts that you have made since you assumed your duties. In particular, I would like to commend you for the highly positive momentum that you have given our discussions and for adopting an inclusive and constructive approach to the consultations that you have undertaken. I also welcome your summary of the proposals put forward in our discussions so far. In my view, this summary gives an accurate picture of all these discussions.

We note the proposal that you have just presented to us, which I will be sure to pass on to our capital for appropriate consideration. We will, of course, need to see a definitive text before we can make a formal statement on the proposal but, as an initial step, I would like to give you a sense of the French delegation's feelings about the proposal, which we find interesting in several respects.

The first point to highlight is that the proposal is a continuation of the work that we have carried out so far and that maintaining such continuity appears to be a priority for all the delegations in this forum. The second important point is that the proposal is based on our ability to hold technical discussions in a manner that will enable this forum to resume its mandated role. It is important that we capitalize on the technical discussions held earlier so that we can move forward in our work. The third important point is that you are proposing a phased approach to the progressive development of a programme of work: we believe this approach to be indispensable and one that will enable this body to resume its mandate. In our view, this phased approach is essential to achieving a greater common understanding of the challenges that we face. In conclusion, I can assure you that France will adopt a constructive approach so that we can forge ahead and ensure that this forum can finally return to substantive work and resume its original mandate.

The President: I thank the representative of France for his statement and I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Louafi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor at a formal meeting under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and thank you for the efforts you have made since assuming this challenging task. We hereby reiterate our support and cooperation for your advancement of the goals of the Conference. We also wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the observations that you made today. We consider that the approach adopted in the document reflects all the views expressed at the beginning of our work this year. It also constitutes an approach that can assist us in achieving a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Mr. President, I took the floor simply to request a clarification regarding the participation of civil society. We support such participation and consider that it could bring added value to the Conference's discussions. You mentioned on the last page a point relating to the participation of civil society. We would appreciate a clarification regarding the relationship between civil society participation and the work of the groups that you have proposed.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria and I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Sidharta (Indonesia): Mr. President, first of all allow me to thank you for all your efforts in steering this august body and leading our work towards a programme of

work. My delegation has been listening very carefully to all the comments and all the input from delegations here on how we would like to proceed with our work in this Conference. I would like to share with you our positive response: it is a preliminary response, of course, and we will consult with our capital on your proposal. Where our preliminary point of view is concerned, however, I can share with you our positive response to your proposal and I see that this is a good way to capture all the discussions that have been conducted in the past couple of weeks. If we can add our suggestions to the proposal, perhaps we would like to echo what has been said by some of the delegations that the discussions or the deliberations will be very important for us to maintain our work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Last year, we have seen how the working group on the way ahead, led by Ambassador Htin Lynn, carried out very substantive work; unfortunately, however, we do not have any outcome or any reference from the working group. Our humble suggestion, therefore, is that the next discussion or deliberation that we conduct in these sessions should be more structured and we should also have some tangible outcome, whether it is a chair's factual report or any other document. The most important thing is that we can use that document as a reference for our future work. So rest assured, Mr. President, of our support for your proposal and we will provide further specific input in the forthcoming plenary meeting.

Allow me also, Mr. President, to add and to respond to the comments by delegations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Indonesia is one of the countries which signed the new treaty adopted last year, on the basis of our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequence that might already have occurred through the use of the nuclear weapons. This reasoning is beyond reasonable doubt and accepted by the almost 120 member States that adopted the treaty.

Then again, we cannot set aside the fact that, now that the treaty is on the table, we need to take a look at this fact in a positive manner, rather than to contradict it with another legal instrument. Let me once again emphasize the Indonesian position that our support for the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons would never diminish our commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. As a matter of fact, as a faithful party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we uphold our responsibility under that Treaty. As a reflection of our support to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Indonesia will host another regional dialogue and consultations in preparation for the forthcoming meeting of the preparatory committee in March 2018. I will share further details over the coming days. That is our preliminary point of view.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Ji Haojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, under your leadership during the past two weeks, we have had very fruitful discussions about how to carry forward the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We express our appreciation for the positive efforts that you have made. In the course of these discussions, the parties not only summed up the experiences and lessons of the past, but also looked to the future and presented some constructive ideas to give new impetus to the work of the Conference. China is of the view that your summary of the earlier stage of our discussion is comprehensive and objective, reflecting all parties' appraisals of the current situation of the Conference, along with their visions for its future development. Your proposals not only embody those visions and address the concerns of all parties, but also take account of traditional issues and emerging challenges, and are generally balanced and reasonable.

In consideration of all this, our delegation takes a positive view of your proposals and will seek instructions from our capital as soon as possible. China is willing to work together with all parties to promote new progress in the work of the Conference.

Lastly, a point on which I would also like to touch is that China has always advocated the goal of a nuclear-free world. We also consider, however, that the relevant negotiations should be carried out with the participation of the major parties, and a suitable international security environment should be created for those negotiations. They should be

based on reality and take an orderly, step-by-step approach to the phased attainment of this goal. An elephant cannot be swallowed in one bite.

If the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is supposed to be such a good and successful treaty, why are the countries that actively promoted negotiations on this treaty still complaining? How is it that they are they still complaining that no progress has been made in the field of disarmament over the past 20 years and more? Is this (*spoke in English*) "total ban" (*spoke in Chinese*) not a major step forward? I would have thought that the realization of this (*spoke in English*) "total ban" (*spoke in Chinese*) should have accomplished most of the work that we disarmament experts were going to do. Progress that is illusory will not be sustainable.

The President: I thank the representative of China. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cleobury (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I would like to join others in thanking you for your engagement on finding a way forward for this Conference and thank you also for the proposal that you have shared with us today.

I would like to give a few preliminary reactions on behalf of the United Kingdom. We see this proposal in a broadly positive light and are open-minded about it. We feel that, in the absence of an agreement on negotiations, an opportunity to maintain the dialogue that we have already been having and to keep delegations up to speed with issues is worthwhile. In principle, therefore, we are positive about this proposal.

There are, however, a number of logistical and procedural issues that will need to be considered carefully and the Ambassador of Japan has already mentioned a few of those. For example, we will need to find willing coordinators for each of these five subsidiary bodies. We will also need to consider capacity and scheduling issues. On the issue of formality versus informality, our understanding is that these subsidiary bodies, unless explicitly agreed to as formal, would be informal. We would be grateful, Mr. President, if you would address that matter when you come to the issue at the end of the session. We further note the proposal for the participation of experts and civil society and we support that proposal; consideration will, of course, need to be given as to how that would work in practice.

Lastly, I would like to pick up on a point made by the Ambassador of Germany that we would not want this process in any way to be an impediment to agreeing to a programme of work, which remains our ultimate goal.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom. I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you, too, for the efforts that you have been making in recent weeks. Before consulting Madrid about the proposal you have made today, the truth is that I would like to convey the first impression that it made on me, which is that we really have the feeling that we are on the right track. The way ahead is very unclear and very difficult, and we are all well aware that it is not now possible to adopt a programme of work with a negotiating mandate for any item on the agenda, but what you have proposed is an initial phase, an approach. We are not starting from scratch. We must build on sustained work and productive technical discussions that have left a legacy to the Conference on Disarmament, at which views must at some point converge, at which there will certainly be commonalities that will make it possible to continue little by little along this difficult path and achieve a negotiating mandate, the only reason we are in this room.

I believe that we have almost no option other than that which has been proposed today, since it is effectively an indisputable goal for us to discuss the four core items of the agenda and an additional one covering new issues that may be raised. I wonder what we could do other than what you have proposed this afternoon and what we would do, however difficult it may be – and we are well aware that it will be difficult – to reach consensus in the short term if we knew exactly what task is to be accomplished by the 65 delegations in this room. Our response is that it is therefore up to us to ensure that the work done during the session adds value and that we do not merely duplicate exactly what was already

considered last year in the working group on the way ahead. I believe that the request to search for common ground on which to keep building is the right option. You may count on our support.

The President: I thank the representative of Spain, including for his contribution to our efforts to get to this point, through the processes of last year, and for his report. I now invite the representative of Pakistan to take the floor.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to join others in thanking you most profoundly for your leadership and your very able guidance in getting us to this point. We deeply appreciate the manner in which you have presided over the Conference this year and we thank you for the proposal that you have outlined in your opening remarks today. Notwithstanding our priorities in the Conference, which were outlined by my delegation on Tuesday, and in order to be realistic and pragmatic, we see that your proposal quite reasonably and accurately captures the points of convergence. It is a fact that there is no consensus today on the start of negotiations on any issue of the Conference agenda that compels us to look at the next options. In our view, the next best option is to set up a framework that allows for substantive consideration of all agenda items without any preconditions or prejudgment on their outcome or on their relative importance. In that sense, we see your proposal in a very positive light. We have, of course, referred it to our capital and might receive some feedback, which we will convey to you. We recognize that it is not an ideal proposal, but it is certainly the most practical and pragmatic in the circumstances.

Lastly, I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation and positive engagement as you move towards refining this proposal and tabling it formally for our consideration.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. I give the floor to the representative of Iran.

Mr. Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, like other delegations, we would like to thank you sincerely for all your efforts. Of course, we will examine these proposals very carefully, along with the statement that you have made. We will also send it to our capital to be carefully examined and will come back to you on it.

The President: I thank the representative of Iran. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. I apologize for taking the floor, but I just needed to make some final comments in response to the remarks made by the representative of Chile.

In my Government's view, as I have said earlier, the nuclear ban treaty exacerbates divisions in the disarmament community. It does not help to improve the climate. In addition, with regard to the Nuclear Posture Review, this in no way promotes limited nuclear war. I just want to make that fundamentally clear. I repeat, once again: the nuclear ban treaty undermines the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and I will be watching and listening very carefully at the next preparatory committee to see whether the ban proponents live up to their stated word about not trying to undermine the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or that Treaty's process.

My last point with regard to comments made by the representative of Indonesia is that, in my Government's view, there is nothing positive or constructive about the nuclear ban treaty.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Ms. Flores Liera (Mexico): Mr. President, as already mentioned in our bilateral consultations and previously here at the plenary meetings, the expectation of Mexico is that the President should exert all his efforts to present a programme of work with a negotiating mandate. We do not consider that there is a possible substitute to negotiations in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, nor that the presidency should be aiming for second best. We believe that deliberations on disarmament affairs are useful, but that there are other forums in the disarmament machinery for that purpose. As the single

multilateral disarmament negotiating forum established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, if the Conference is not negotiating, it is failing in fulfilling its mandate. In this regard, we reserve the right to make comments on your proposal after the capital reviews it.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico for her statement. I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Abbas (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and I assure you of my delegation's full support for your leadership. I also wish to commend your tireless efforts to find common ground among member States with a view to producing positive results that bolster the role of the Conference on Disarmament and break the 22-year stalemate.

Mr. President, I wish to assure you that your proposals will be sent to our capital for detailed consideration and study, and we hope that the proposals will lay the foundations for progress in the work of the Conference during this year's session.

The President: I thank the representative of Iraq for his comments. Are there any other delegations which wish to take the floor?

I see none. A couple of points have been raised and I do not want now to start responding extensively to each of them, because I believe that this discussion is not over. Many delegations have indicated that they will be referring the matter back to their capitals. As President, I deeply appreciate the sentiments expressed to my country and about the efforts made and these are not just efforts by myself: I am merely reflecting what was said in this room. If we have captured it well, it is to the credit of this whole Conference.

I want to thank those delegations that have been working with us to try to find this glorious middle ground, if you like. I want to thank all the delegations that I have consulted in this process. I have also very much taken into consideration the important work done by Ambassador Lynn last year, and the lessons learned from that exercise – both what worked and what did not work and also the things on which I intend to build. All the discussions, ideas and positions have been laid out during the meetings of the working group on the way ahead. These should not be lost; rather, they should be carefully considered in our work.

To that end, I believe that our discussion today brought out the whole issue very clearly of the difficulty created when something is informal: it does not go on record and there is nothing preserved. The difficulties that sometimes arise with formal discussions have also come out. The last time that we had a discussion on the past proposals that started in an informal manner, it was very interesting that many delegations then chose to speak formally. So I believe that there is some movement and a trend towards straddling the informal-formal dichotomy. I would not like to prejudge that. Let us see where we go. The definitions are there clearly set out in the rules of procedure and let us see how best to do it: the point is to get things working.

Similarly, there are many definitions of civil society, but I think we should see this as a community of people who are linked and who are trying to contribute to the work that we are doing in this body. That would be the broader way to engage, but, as I said in my comments, we must of course do this within the rules and the procedures which have been spelled out for the purpose of the smooth functioning of this body. So I believe that this merits discussion.

Thank you very much to all the delegations that have taken the floor. Thank you to those who, I am sure, will be considering this more carefully. When we meet at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 13 February, we will continue this discussion. But before we close, I would like to inform members that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Guterres, will be coming to Geneva and will address the Conference on Disarmament on the afternoon of Monday, 26 February 2018. In addition, I also wish to inform you that it is my intention to invite the President of the General Assembly and the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Are there any objections to this course of action? I see none.

That concludes our business for today and, as I have said, the next plenary meeting will be at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 13 February.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.